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THE BAPTIST

Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

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Mississippi firefighters to distribute Bibles

By Carl M. White
Associate Editor

Plans are underway to distribute Bibles provided by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB) to all 800 fire stations in the state of Mississippi.

The Mississippi Chapter of the Fellowship of Christian Firefighters International (MFCFI), will distribute the Celebrate Jesus 2000 Bibles, according to Bryan Presson, chief of the Clinton Fire Department and president of the organization.

S. A. "Sonny" Adkins, director of the MBCB evangelism department, along with MBCB executive director/treasurer Jim Futral, were at the Clinton Fire Department's Central Station on Feb. 1 to present the Bibles to Presson and to MFCFI vice-president Robby Bush, a Jackson Fire Department district chief.

"Over two years ago, the Lord put it in my heart to begin some kind of ministry to fire-fighters," said Presson, a member of Morrison Heights Church, Clinton.

He mentioned the idea at a meeting of fire chiefs and it was welcomed. So Presson decided to call the national offices of the Fellowship of Christian Firefighters International in Denver.

"I called their number, but there was no answer. So I thought I was off the hook," Presson recalled.

A year later he still felt the Lord was leading in this direction, so Presson called again.

"This time they answered and I knew I couldn't get out of it."

Presson set up a booth at the annual Fire Chiefs/Firefighters

chief with the Jackson Fire Department and a member of New Covenant Church, was elected vice president; and



BIBLE PRESENTATION — Presenting the first CJ2000 Bible Feb. 1 to the officers of the Mississippi chapter of the Fellowship of Christian Firefighters International (MFCFI), are (from left) Jim Futral, executive director/treasurer of Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB), and S. A. "Sonny" Adkins, MBCB evangelism director. Receiving the Bible are Clinton fire chief Bryan Presson (second from right) and Robby Bush, Jackson Fire Department district chief. (Photo by Carl M. White)

Association's convention in Hattiesburg this past June. So many firefighters expressed interest in being part of a Christian fellowship they held an organizational meeting, elected officers and began making plans, Presson said.

Presson was elected president. Robby Bush, a district fire

Steven Bardwell, an instructor at the state fire academy, was elected secretary-treasurer.

"The Lord just brought everything together," Presson observed. "We started talking about the kinds of things we could accomplish as Christian witness among firefighters. One of the guys suggested we

start a web page. Another guy who does this on the side said he would set it up for free.

"A short time later a Clinton business man walked into my office and asked if I needed any help on anything. I shared with him about our plans, and he gave me a check for \$500 to go toward the postage to mail the Bibles. The Lord met the need before the plans were ever put together," Presson said.

A few weeks ago Presson contacted Adkins. Since April 1999, Mississippi Baptists have distributed Celebrate Jesus 2000 Bibles throughout the state. According to Adkins, Presson and his organization present a perfect opportunity to reach out to firefighters and their families.

For Presson and Bush, the MFCFI provides the opportunity to bring together two important aspects of their lives — their love for the Lord, and their love for fire fighting.

Adkins said 63 of the state's Baptist associations have distributed over 550,000 Bibles since the beginning of the Celebrate Jesus 2000 campaign. In addition, student ministries on 16 college campuses are involved.

For more information on Bible distributions, contact Adkins at P. O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone (601) 292-3278, or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 278.

For more information on MFCFI, contact Presson at (601) 925-1019 or (601) 362-5812; or contact Bush at (601) 960-2242 or (601) 897-2620.

WHAT'S IN THE RECORD

CP sets record in '99

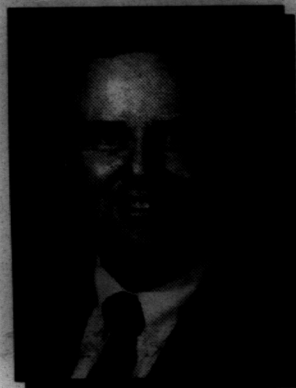
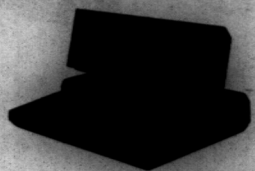
Steeles top charts

Letters to the editor

Sunday School lessons

Miss. CP has strong ties to SBC CP records increase

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Where's the money?

The year was 1992. The first Mississippi casino opened to enthusiastic predictions of unlimited economic benefits and an end to revenue-starved local and state governments. The sky is the limit, proponents told us.

Like alcohol 25 years before, the question was asked: What of the human cost — the broken families, the neglected children, the explosion in the need for social services, the drain on benevolent organizations?

Don't worry, we were told. The benefits of legalized gambling can't even be measured. Why worry about the destruction of a pitiful handful of individuals when there is so much money to be gained?

Like alcohol 25 years before, legalized gambling was to be our financial savior. No longer would roads go unpaved. Government services could be elevated to luxury levels. New life would be breathed into municipalities on the verge of bankruptcy.

Legalized gambling would propel Mississippi to the top of everyone's travel and corporate relocation lists. Tourists and business people would come from thousands of miles around just to soak up the New Mississippi — and spend a lot of cash with local merchants in the process.

Elected officials and casino honchos called town meetings to describe to their wide-eyed audiences how public schools would never want for anything again. The days of low-paid teachers, dog-eared textbooks, substandard facilities, and basement-level achievement test scores were all in the past.

Best of all, the politicians implied, the onerous tax burden on the residents of the poorest state in the nation would finally be

relieved. There would be no need to reach deeper into the pockets of Mississippians to run their government.

Fast forward to the present, less than eight years after that first casino opened. While underpaid teachers fight over a single, antiquated VCR in a crumbling elementary school, local businesses fade away as the brute economic force of the casinos takes its toll.

Roads still have potholes. Most of the high-paying management jobs at casinos go to people imported from Las Vegas and Atlantic City. More money than ever flees from poor Mississippians to further enrich some of the richest people on earth.

Worse still, the leaders in the Mississippi Legislature, meeting right now in Jackson, have just warned us that the state's budget is just too tight for comfort. Programs may have to be cut, and the Department of Transportation is so strapped for highway maintenance funds that another five-cent tax may have to be added to each gallon of gasoline sold in the state.

Despite an ever-increasing annual contribution of millions upon millions of dollars in taxes from the casinos, drastic measures are going to have to be taken to make ends meet and keep the state's budget in balance.

The question that screams to be asked is: Where's the money? If the casinos were going to save us, as we were promised, what happened to all that money? What continues to happen to that money, year after year?

If we are to suffer the personal and social consequences of legalizing one of the most addictive behaviors known to man — if we are to wink at all the lives destroyed by this plague — shouldn't

"REMIND ME TO PREACH ON STEWARDSHIP MORE. THE PARKING LOT'S LOOKING TOO AFFLUENT LATELY!"



there be some accountability for the staggering amounts of public money reaped from this dark enterprise?

Maybe it's time to contact your legislators and ask them, "Where's the money?" Not every legislator supports legalized gambling, but every legislator is responsible for providing a reasonable explanation to his/her constituents on what happened to the state's gambling windfall.

Who knows? The experience may open our eyes to the stupidity of looking to our vices for salvation.

GUEST OPINION:



Racial reconciliation is a family matter

By C. Ben Mitchell

SBC Ethics and Religious Comm.



tory is the One with whom all persons must deal. Because God has made us, he has both the authority and power to make claims on our lives. We are his creatures, dwelling on his earth, as inhabitants of his own universe. Paul championed the great truth that God is sovereign ruler of his created order.

To hate another person whom God has made is a despicable form of self-loathing. That is, since we are all made from the same first parents (of one blood), to hate another human being is to hate ourselves.

In a very important sense, we are all family. Racial hatred, discrimination, and injustice are family matters. We stand accountable before our Maker for how we treat one another. We cannot declare our love to God while harboring hatred toward members of our family.

We cannot call on God's justice while tolerating injustice and race-based discrimination.

Paul's message was no doubt tailored perfectly for the intelligentsia of Athens. Another person has put Paul's message more simply: "Red and yellow, black and white, they are precious in his sight. Jesus loves the little children of the world."

Therefore, let us love one another!

Mitchell is consultant on biomedical and life issues for the Southern Baptist Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission in Nashville.

Common 'cents' prevails in Indiana school

SCOTTSBURG, Ind. (BP) — A ground-breaking set of good conduct guidelines adopted by a southern Indiana school system will not be challenged by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU).

Scott County, Ind., School District 2's "Common 'Cents' Precepts to Promote a Virtuous and Civil School Community" were posted in seven schools in mid-January. The 10 precepts were posted after the school board dropped one that read, "Trust in God."

Ken Falk, legal director of the ACLU's Indiana affiliate, said his client decided not to take the case to court. In December, the civil liberties organization had notified the board of its intent to sue if the list was posted with the "Trust in God" guideline.

"If the primary reference to God was removed, then we decided not to pursue it," Falk said.

Rob Hooker, superintendent of Scott County schools, said he didn't know whether the board had dodged a legal bullet. Its only desire was to post legally defensible guidelines for student conduct, he said.

"The issue is still what goes up on our walls and its purpose," said Hooker, who became the superintendent last fall after serving as assistant superintendent in a neighboring county. "We're still working on our educational display of the Ten Commandments."

The rural county's school board voted last fall to post the commandments, but Hooker suggested the precepts as an alternative.

A framed copy of the precepts hangs in the board's office. Framed copies will be supplied for every principal's office, hallway, and school lobby, he said.

Laminated copies will be supplied for every classroom, the superintendent added.

In addition to the precepts, the board voted to purchase additional materials on morality for school libraries and to establish an educational/historical display that includes the Ten Commandments.

A bill to permit public postings of the commandments on

posals to also post the Mosaic law. He said the board is moving ahead with its plans, regardless.

"I believe the ACLU and others will file to block it," he said. "There may still be a battle out there but we're proceeding with our own resolution."

other documents. That kind of thing isn't going to pass muster."

The battle in Indiana is only one of a host of Ten Commandments cases being contested in state legislatures and other venues across the nation. Among others that have appeared in recent press reports:

◆ Georgia legislator Charles Poag has filed a bill that would make displays of the Ten Commandments a requirement in every public school classroom. Failure to meet the condition would deny state education funds to the schools.

The Democrat told the Chattanooga Times & Free Press, "The attorneys who drew it up wanted to do it that way. They may say it's illegal in court, but we'll still try it."

SCOTT COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT 2

Common "Cents" Precepts to Promote a Virtuous and Civil School Community

- Respect authority.
- Honor your parents and family members.
- Treat your classmates, teachers, and school staff with respect.
- Speak kindly to and about others.
- Resolve conflicts without using violence.
- Tell the truth.
- Save sex for marriage.
- Stay drug and alcohol free.
- Leave other people's property alone.
- Avoid being jealous of what others have.

state-owned property, as long as they are part of an educational display, passed by a wide margin Jan. 25 in the Indiana Senate. It is awaiting action in the state's House of Representatives.

Hooker doesn't know if the state legislation will have an impact on Scott County's pro-

While Falk said the state legislation appears constitutional on its face, he predicted it will still create a flurry of legal challenges.

"It depends on what the display is and what's in it," the ACLU official said. "I think it will spur a massive amount of litigation as these displays go up. A historical display in a school setting will be much more questionable than in a courthouse."

"I've seen displays where the display consisted of the Ten Commandments and one or two

◆ A bill has been introduced in the Kentucky legislature to allow schools to post the Ten Commandments, provided the display is approved in a local referendum and is part of a program in which the commandments are taught in the context of other moral and legal guidelines.

The ACLU, meanwhile, has filed suits challenging postings of the Ten Commandments in two county courthouses and one county school district.

◆ In South Dakota, the Senate State Affairs Committee approved legislation during the week of Jan. 24 to give local officials the authority to decide if the Ten Commandments can be posted in schools, according to a report in Culture Facts, published by the Family Research Council.

◆ A bill was filed in the Oklahoma legislature to allow copies of the Ten Commandments to be posted in public buildings and schools in that state.



MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

THE
SECOND
FRONT PAGE

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Arrest made in missionary deaths

BOMBAY, India (BP) — Police in India arrested a man wanted for killing Australian Baptist missionary Graham Staines and his two sons, according to a British Broadcasting Corp (BBC) report cited by the Crosswalk.com Internet site.

Dara Singh, the suspect, had evaded police in Orissa state for more than a year, but a tip resulted in his arrest in a remote village at dawn Feb. 1, the BBC said. Police had offered an \$18,000 reward for Singh, believed to be the leader of a mob of radical Hindus that set fire to Staines' car as he and his sons slept inside near a village in Orissa Jan. 23, 1999. Singh also is suspected in the murders of a Muslim merchant and a Catholic priest, news reports said.

The arrest comes two days after the release of Gladys Staines' book, "Burnt Alive: The Story of the Staines and the God They Loved." Gladys has continued to work with lepers in Orissa and has publicly forgiven Singh because "forgiveness opens up the path of healing," she told a Bombay audience. New restrictions have been placed on religious freedom in Orissa, however, Crosswalk.com reported. A state order that requires police to investigate conversions is a "blatant violation" of the religious freedom guaranteed in India's constitution, church leader Herold Mullick said. "It is strange that the exercise of fundamental rights would depend on a police report."

The order requires anyone wishing to change faiths to report to a magistrate, who orders a police investigation. Leaders say the order affects only Christians and is intended to intimidate Hindus from converting.

Looking back

10 years ago

The program and budget subcommittee of the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee proposes a radical reduction in support of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs. If passed, the Washington-based organization's budget would be slashed 87.24%.

20 years ago

W. F. "Pete" Evans assumes the pastorate of State Boulevard Church, Meridian. Evans, a graduate of Mississippi College in Clinton and Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky., served as pastor of First Church, New Albany, for 18 1/2 years before the call to Meridian.

50 years ago

A five-year enlargement campaign for Mississippi College ended Dec. 31 with eight buildings added to the Clinton campus during the campaign. An investment of \$1,000,000 was made, without one cent of debt. Student enrollment has grown from 400 to more than 1,200 students.

Mississippi CP tallies another record year

By William H. Perkins Jr.
Editor

Mississippi Baptist churches continued to set the Cooperative Program (CP) pace last year for the Southern Baptist Convention, recording a seventh consecutive record and finishing with total gifts for the work of the Lord in the amount of \$28,435,692 — nearly seven percent above the previous year's record.

That record CP total means:

- the programs of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB), which is charged

- with disbursing CP receipts according to the budget approved each year by messengers to the Mississippi Baptist Convention (MBC) annual meeting, were fully funded for 1999.

- 37% of the CP total (including directly funded missions) was sent on for use in the programs of the Southern Baptist Convention, as directed by messengers to the 1999 MBC annual meeting.

- the challenge portion of the 1999 budget (the amount remaining after budget

requirements were met, or \$1,827,802) was distributed 50% to Christian education in Mississippi, 30% to international missions, 10% to North American missions, and 10% to Mississippi missions.

The distribution formula for each year's challenge budget is also set by messengers to the MBC annual meetings.

"What a wonderful year! Thank God for his marvelous, mission-minded, gracious people in Mississippi Baptist churches," said Jim Futral, MBCB executive director-treasurer.

David Michel, MBCB associate execu-

"Shouldn't the unprecedented growth in CP giving over the last several years encourage us to ask God for an enlarged vision? The increased offerings give us spiritual confidence to expand our understanding of who Mississippi Baptists are and where the boundaries of our witness can be drawn.

"I believe God is calling us to a larger, more personal role in missions participation around the world," Michel said.

Mississippi Baptists also started the new century with a bang, giving \$2,578,507 in January 2000 — the seventh highest

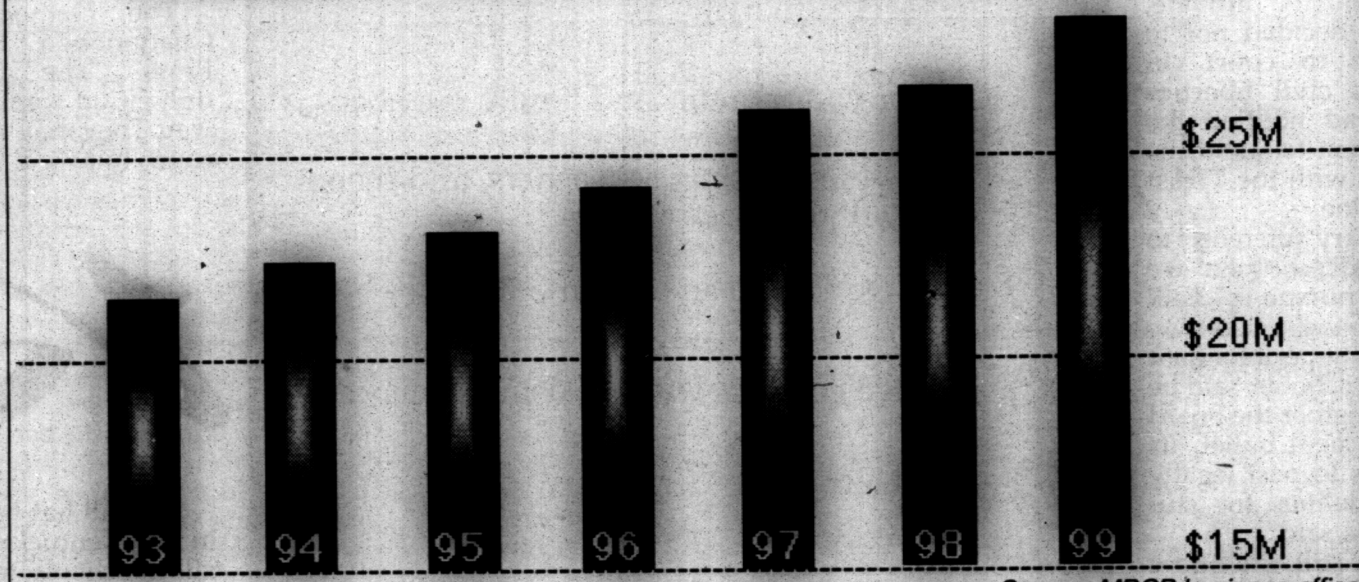
monthly total in Mississippi CP history. (For more information, please see article on page one).

January 2000 also represents the fifth straight month CP gifts have topped \$2,000,000, with only two months last year (May and August) dropping below the \$2,000,000 mark.

For more information

on the Cooperative Program, contact Michel at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3231, or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651. E-mail: dmichel@mbcb.org.

MISSISSIPPI COOPERATIVE PROGRAM, BY YEAR



Source: MBCB business office

Super Bowl MVP gives Christ credit

ST. LOUIS (ABP) — National Football League quarterback Kurt Warner told a radio reporter he plans to use his rapid rise from obscurity to Super Bowl MVP as a platform to speak about his Christian faith.

Warner led the St. Louis Rams to a 23-16 victory Jan. 30 with a record performance in a Super Bowl XXXIV described as the best in history. Warner completed 24 of 45 passes for 414 yards and two touchdowns, the last a 73-yard play that broke a 16-16 tie with 1:54 left in the game. An attempted comeback by the Tennessee Titans ended with a tackle one yard from the goal line as time expired.

The Warner family attends St. Louis Family Church. Pastor Jeff Perry leads a Bible study in the Warners' home on Wednesday nights during the football season.

Warner turned down an appearance on the David Letterman Show because it conflicted with his wedding anniversary. He has his own breakfast cereal, Warner's Krunch Time, and proceeds go to a Christian camp for children with special needs.

AN AMPUTATED NOSE

I was raised in what now would be considered, and even then was considered, a fairly large family — five boys, and a mama and daddy.

Six guys and mama. As you can imagine, the home environment was not shaped just to fit one person's needs. Rather, things were done in a manner that would be best for all. It required understanding, some degree of flexibility, and tolerance on everyone's part.

Needless to say there were times when I, or one of the other "younguns" was not understanding, flexible, or tolerant! As youngsters tend to do, one of us might pout.

After studying some psychology and human behavior, I understand now that those actions were just designed to express an opinion or a point of view regardless of whether it was right or wrong. While she had many sayings, I can remember my mother telling one of us, and sometimes it was me, "Don't cut off your nose to spite your face."

Something had happened involving my brothers and me, and life was not going along to suit me. To show my displeasure, I made up my mind not to eat supper. My mother coaxed me, but the issues were



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

too great so I insisted, "I'm not hungry!"

She knew I was and she knew I needed to eat, so out came mama's proverb, "Don't cut off your nose to spite your face." It's a strange little statement but so true, that we need to be careful not to do things that actually harm us in order to express how we feel.

Some months ago I was talking with one of our pastors who explained to me that he did not like something that was being done, or more accurately, something that was not being done in Southern Baptist life. In the changes that have taken place in Convention structure, something that he felt was very important had been left out. We talked about it and he certainly had some valid concerns.

His response was that he was going to lead his church to not be a part of anything related to Southern Baptist life or missions.

As I listened to him express his desire to stop funding anything in Southern Baptist life, I realized that the issue about which he was concerned would not have been a percent of one percent of the totality of Southern Baptist missions.

I heard my mother's words but I refused to say them. As we talked a while, I did weave into our conversation three questions that I felt were important:

- "Since others are not doing what you feel ought to be done, do you feel that you should just do nothing at all?"

That is not really the way he felt and that is not the way he viewed it, but it would have been the end result.

- "Who are you hurting?"

The reason I asked that question is because I knew that this man knew missionaries both in the U.S. and abroad. I knew that he had friends, colleagues, and mentors in the faith who would be directly affected by his decision making.

I also knew there were areas of vital concern to him, if he did what he had expressed, that would also be affected and work that would be damaged. He was aware of those things and had already struggled with some of those issues.

- I asked if it would not be better if he worked at helping people understand the importance of the area he was concerned about and tried to get it funded rather than just "defunding" everyone.

Well, he had thought about that and while he thought it might not be possible, he has chosen to try to help in the total cause of Christ and missions.

We Baptists fiercely believe in the Priesthood of the Believer and the autonomy of churches, associations, conventions, and individual entities. That is right and as it should be, but the freedom to be individual and autonomous also carries with it the opportunities to join together and to live and serve as a family of faith.

We may not always agree on every issue at every turn, but in Christ we can agree to be family — a loving family, encouraging family, helpful family, and a family faithful to the Father and faithful to each other.

Orchestras instrumental in Baptist churches

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — In the early 1970's Camp Kirkland pioneered a new field of music ministry in the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) when he became a church's full-time orchestra director. Nearly 30 years later, more than 100 full-time orchestra directors and nearly 70,000 volunteer instrumentalists have joined the ranks.

The church orchestra is once again on the upswing and that's good news for churches within the SBC, said Mark Johnson, instrumental consultant and editor for LifeWay Christian Resources.

"Instrumental music is a growing, evolving ministry. It reflects what I feel is a growing trend towards the inclusion of more musicians in the worship service," Johnson said. "Generally, we are moving away from churches [which] only use the piano and organ. Having additional instrumentalists allows more people to be included in ministry."

In the early days of the church orchestra, Johnson said only mega-churches had instrumental music programs, such as Camp Kirkland's at First Church, Jacksonville, Fla.

All that changed in the late 1970's and 1980's when church orchestras flourished. Churches of all sizes began to pioneer instrumental music programs, and many churches created full-time staff positions to accommodate the growing interest in the ministry opportunity.

And while the ministries grew, there was also a challenge — finding instrumental music. "It was a struggle because there was a time when the number of music

resources available to church orchestras was more limited. Some groups had to create their own arrangements and play the same music over and over again."

Now, however, Johnson said there are a large number of instrumental selections available, including hymn books. "Virtually every hymn book has orchestra parts and all the new choral music comes with instrumental arrangements. There are

According to the Annual Church Profile count, between 65,000 to 70,000 people are members of a church instrumental ensemble and more than 100 directors are employed at SBC churches.

"There was a point several years ago that instrumental music was the fastest-growing facet of music ministry in the SBC," said Terry McNatt, associate pastor of worship and music at Germantown Church in Tennessee. "I first started in this back in 1986 and you only saw orchestras in fairly large churches. Now, there are guys starting orchestras in churches with 300 in Sunday School."

Orchestras have been a wonderful addition to the worship services at Germantown, McNatt reflected. "The orchestra provides a color and excitement in the music that you cannot replace with any other instrument. You can't imitate it," he said.

While many church orchestras play traditional hymns and worship choruses, McNatt said the church orchestra is also a springboard for the development of praise bands.

"We've had guys that we started using as players on Sunday mornings and as they got better we found that we could use them on Sunday night when we worship with a praise band," McNatt said.

No matter what style of worship is used in the future, McNatt said he believes that church orchestras will remain a viable worship tool. "Most importantly, you are allowing people to be ministers. The church orchestra is a ministry opportunity."

No one should know that better than Jeff Cranfill, associate minister of music at Red Bank Church, Chattanooga, Tenn. Cranfill's conversion was the result of an invitation to join a church orchestra.

"For me, the church orchestra is what got me to church to begin with. A friend invited me to play in his church orchestra at First Church Atlanta, and I thought it would be fun," Cranfill said. It wasn't long after that invitation that Cranfill accepted Jesus Christ into his life. Eventually, his entire family would be led to the Lord.

"If nothing else, the church orchestra can minister to those who are lost by bringing them into the group," he said.

Rob Thomas, the minister of music and worship at First Church, Hendersonville, Tenn., and former associate minister of music at First Church, Jackson, said church orchestras are coming into their own. "I think it's a great time to have a church orchestra," he said. "These groups are like family. They watch out for one another. They minister to each other."

Thomas, who directed the orchestra at First Church, Jackson, for eight years, said church orchestras serve a number of purposes. "Their playing fulfills a need they have to give their gift back to God," he said.

In addition to orchestras being an outreach tool, Cranfill cites a biblical mandate for worship. "Spiritually speaking, you have to go back to Psalm 150 where it says to praise the Lord. Not to consider it. There is obedience to the Lord here."

"God has given us the ability to communicate emotions through music, and when you use that and let God speak to his people through the song, people are going to be blessed," Cranfill said.



IMPORTANCE GROWING — Members of the Mississippi Baptist Symphony Orchestra perform January 22 at the Mississippi Coliseum in Jackson during the special production of God For Us, a part of the 2000 Mississippi Baptist Evangelism Conference. Baptist orchestras are growing in importance in churches across the Southern Baptist Convention. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

a number of publishers supplying the needs for instrumental musicians and LifeWay is at the forefront of that effort," Johnson added.

While the future of the church orchestra is looking brighter, Johnson said the biggest challenge facing musicians is to experience growth proportionate to that of the 1970's and 1980's.

Church members 'Meet a Need' with help from SBC World Hunger Fund

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (BP) — Acting on what he felt was God's calling, pharmaceutical salesman Antoine Scruggs at age 31 resigned his job and, along with five other people, started Promiseland Church in Little Rock in 1997.

Realizing that the gospel must be lived as well as preached, the group began immediately ministering to the community around them, with the motto "Meet a Need: Plant a Seed."

God's blessings on the effort include average attendance of more than 200 and a church building that was virtually given them by a declining church in the neighborhood. "God has provided this facility for us to use in his work," Scruggs said, then noting, "We are already beginning to run out of space for Sunday School."

Staffed primarily by volunteers, church programs are numerous and varied. With help from the Southern Baptist World Hunger Fund, an after-school program known as "Promise University" provides children with a snack and help with their homework.

Hunger funds also made it possible for the church to distribute Thanksgiving and Christmas baskets to the needy in the community. Three basketball teams provide youth with snacks and involvement in a spiritual atmosphere.

The church's day-camp summer pro-

gram provides balanced meals to needy children while teaching them of Christ's love through activities and Bible studies. A preschool program called "Promise Christian Academy" will begin in the fall.

One visit to the church, even during the week, reveals an active, enthusiastic church body. Virtually every member gets involved in some way.

Some teach while others work to renovate the church's recently acquired building. Still other volunteers distribute food and counsel the needy who come by for help.

In the proliferation of these activities, the purpose of winning people to Christ is central. Over the past two years, the church has seen more than 70 baptisms. One 11-year-old boy, a former gang member, came to saving faith in Jesus Christ after becoming involved in activities at the church.

Gifts to the Southern Baptist World Hunger Fund assist ministries like this one across the United States and in more than 50 other countries.

With personnel and volunteers already in place, all gifts are used 100% for hunger with nothing taken out for administration or promotion.

Anyone desiring information how they or their church can support the Southern Baptist World Hunger Fund may contact the SBC's Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission at (800) 475-9127.

Promise Keepers closes eight offices

DENVER (ABP) — Promise Keepers has closed its eight regional offices in a major restructuring, according to a report by Charisma News Service. The work is being transferred to the men's movement's national office in Denver.

A Promise Keepers official said the move was designed to make Promise Keepers more effective in working with existing ministries in conference locations.

The organization has announced plans for 15 conferences this year, with first-time venues in Orlando, Fla.; Louisville, Ky.; Baton Rouge, La.; Worcester, Mass.; Albuquerque, N.M.; and Lynchburg, Va.

More than 3.5 million men have participated in stadium and arena events around the country since former college football coach Bill McCartney founded Promise Keepers in 1990.

The organization downsized in 1998, due to a major loss in income after it stopped charging registration fees for its conferences, and has continued to suffer financial setbacks, the news service reported.

School severs ties with convention

PHOENIX (BP) — Anguish in the Arizona Baptist family mounted Jan. 13 when Grand Canyon University (GCU) trustees removed the institution from a formal relationship with the Arizona Southern Baptist Convention.

The Arizona convention founded the university 50 years ago and elects its trustees. Now with 2,000-plus students, it is the state's only private Christian liberal arts university.

Grand Canyon trustees said they hope to continue a "close, cooperative relationship" with the state convention.

E. Eugene Barnett, age 62, dies

E. Eugene Barnett, 62, a retired minister and a member of Brewer Church, Lee Association, died Jan. 9 at his home after a long illness. He was a graduate of Blue Mountain College and received his master's degree and doctorate from Luther Rice Seminary. Barnett was licensed and ordained to the ministry by Brewer Church in 1969, and served as pastor at Valley Grove Church, Pontotoc County; Harmony Church, Walnut; North Winona Church, Winona; and Camp Ground Church, Water Valley. Survivors include his wife Wilodyne; sons, Richard Barnett of Winona, and Donald Barnett of Brewer; daughters, Pamela Golding of Winona, and Stephanie Barnett of Brewer.

George County Women's Retreat will be held at the George County High School Cafetorium, Lucedale, on March 17 and 18. The retreat will begin Friday with registration at 5:30 p.m. and will begin at 7:30 a.m. on Saturday. Wilma Stanchfield of Winterhaven, Fla., will be the keynote speaker. For registration or more information, contact Mary Hatcher at (601) 947-8304 or

Ferris Woodard 947-4790.

Line Creek Church, Morton, is having Fabulous Friday's during February, with the theme "An Encouraging Word for a Discouraged World." The speakers are Hardy Denham, interim pastor of Sylvarena Church, Feb. 11; Louis Smith, interim pastor of First Church, Morton, Feb. 18; and Tim Robertson, pastor of White Oak Church, Feb. 25. Jerry



Mississippi State University's (MSU) Baptist Student Union (BSU) recently celebrated the new year by welcoming new and returning students to school. The students called this night Celebrating Jesus 2000. Students pictured are Laura Dufour of Madison, Leah Duckworth of Petal, and Marcee Perkins of Madison. For more information about the BSU at MSU, call (662) 323-5761.

Holmes, pastor of East Morton Church, will be leading the music each service. For more information, call Wesley Scott Walters at (601) 732-2339 or the church office 732-2261.

The Pfeifers from Washington Court House, Ohio, will be in concert at Liberty Church, Waynesboro, on Feb. 11 at 7 p.m. For further information, call (601) 671-0860.



First Church, Ovett, recently held deacon ordination on Dec. 11 for Jim Landrum and Howard Graham. Pictured (from left) are Jim and Donna Landrum; Tommy Mangum, pastor; and Howard and Mary Graham.

BAPTIST COLLEGE NEWS

The 2000 Meeting of the Alabama-Mississippi Sociological Association will be held on Feb. 17 and 18 at Mississippi College. The theme of the 2000 annual meeting is "Sociology and Service: the New Millennium." Registration will begin Thursday at noon, followed by the keynote address

by Dolphus Weary at 1 p.m. Weary is one of the founders and serves as the Executive Director of Mission Mississippi, a statewide group dedicated to racial reconciliation. For more information, contact Lee Darlin at (601) 925-3849.

Three William Carey College (WCC) alumni were honored at the Homecoming Awards Luncheon held recently on campus. Joseph McDonald Ernest III of Clemmons, N.C., received the WCC Distinguished Alumnus Award. Ernest, who currently serves as associate professor in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Wake Forest University School of Medicine in Winston-Salem, was a 1973 summa cum laude graduate of Carey. Novelette Ebanks of the Cayman Islands was awarded the WCC Distinguished Young Alumna Award. Ebanks, a certified public accountant with KPMG is a 1989 summa cum laude graduate of Carey. Ben Carlisle was awarded the WCC Service Award. Carlisle earned a bachelor of science degree at Carey in 1968. He currently serves as pastor of Arlington Heights Church in Pascagoula.

LOTTIE MOON GOALS REACHED



RAs of Ridgecrest Church, Madison, collected \$420 for the LMCO. Church members would leave postage paid for Christmas cards at the RA post office for other church members to pick-up. There were 1,200 cards delivered through the post office.

Pheba Church, Pheba, received \$2,347.30 for LMCO. Almost \$2,000 was given in one day. The average in Sunday School is only in the 50's.

Springfield Church, Morton, with an average of 92 in Sunday School, gave \$6,675 for the LMCO, exceeding its goal of \$6,000. The church also gives 20% of its budget offerings to the Cooperative Program. Frank Lay is pastor.

The youth of Webb Church, Webb, gave a total of \$152 to the LMCO. The youth in the Sunday School classes of Sarah Sumner, Betty Sharpe, and Debbie Morgan decided to give a minimum of 35 cents each Sunday for special mission offerings.



Youth of Webb Church, Webb

All 29 churches in Clarke County Association gave to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering (LMCO). "The total amount reported by the churches was \$50,015.56, exceeding the \$50,000 goal for the association," said Grady Crowell, director of missions.

New Hope Church, Starkville, exceeded its goal set for LMCO. The goal was set at \$1,200 while the total gift was \$2,007.71. Eddie Painter is pastor.

Barnes Crossing Church, Tupelo, exceeded its goal of \$300. J. D. Johnson is pastor.

First Church of Oloh, Sumrall, set a goal of \$3,500 for LMCO. The amount received was over \$3,800. The members also delivered 50 fruit baskets to individuals/families within the community. Jipper Williford is pastor.

Melrose Church, Bentonia, with an average of 26 in Sunday School, received \$4,671.43. for LMCO. B. Wayne Long is pastor.

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Open Dates for 2000:

May 21, 28 - June 18, 25 (Sunday only) - July 23, 30 August 6, 20 (Sunday only), 27 - October 8, 15, 29 - November 5, 26 - December 3 (Sunday only), 17, 24, 31

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What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the

HOUSE TOPS.

Matthew 10:27 NAS

February 10, 2000

HouseTops is a Baptist Record supplement produced by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Office of Communication.

Witnessing Through Media

AWARDS ENTRY FORM

PURPOSE:

The Witnessing Through Media Awards have been created to recognize radio and video productions which demonstrate excellence in message design and production in helping to bring Mississippi and the world to Jesus.

WHEN:

May 5-6, 2000—Awards Banquet on Friday, May 5, 7-9 p.m.

WHERE:

Workshops on Saturday, May 6, 8 a.m.-3:15 p.m.

Ridgecrest Baptist Church, 7469 Old Canton Road, Madison

AWARDS WILL BE GIVEN IN THE FOLLOWING CATEGORIES:

Due to diversity in the types of production equipment and personnel, the MBIB Steering Committee has developed two award divisions. One award for VIDEO (broadcast or non-broadcast) and one award for RADIO in each category in each division. One award only for Best First Time Entry.

1. BEST PROGRAM

A. MISSIONS / EVANGELISM

B. CHURCH MUSICALS

C. COMMUNITY SERVICE (i.e., human interest, sports, and others)

2. BEST SPOT

3. BEST FIRST TIME ENTRY.

Division I

People using VHS Camcorders or other consumer/industrial-grade equipment in production as well as volunteers or small budget projects.

Division II

People using S-VHS, 3/4-inch, 3/4-inch SP, BetaCam and other broadcast type equipment. Also have a professional in charge or outside production house. (This also applies to radio stations or other professional sound productions.)

ENTRY PROCEDURE:

1. Each entry must include: • An entry form, description and fee.
• A \$5.00 fee per entry (Make checks payable to the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.)
2. A separate entry form and fee is required for each category entered. Duplicate the entry form, if necessary.
3. Entry fee does not apply to workshop registration fee.
4. Submit video program and spot entries on 1/2 inch VHS in SP mode only. Submit audio program and spot entries on audio cassette tape.

5. Submit each program entry on a separate tape and clearly label with:

•Name of Local ACTS Board or Church

•Title of Entry

•Category Name

•Original Running Time

6. The program should have been aired or viewed prior to March 1, 2000.

7. The judges reserve the right to move an entry to an appropriate category, add or delete categories.

8. All questions must be answered on entry form.

Entries must be in the office of Broadcast Services at the Baptist Building no later than March 15, 2000, 4:45 p.m. Contact Broadcast Services for more info: 968-3800 or 1-800-748-1651

ENTRY FORM

The following information must be included with all entries:

Entry Title _____

Category Name _____

Division I or II _____ Original Running Time _____

Name of Entrant (LAB, Church, etc.) _____

Contact Person _____ Position _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Office phone _____ Home phone _____

SHOULD YOU WIN...give exact name of organization as you want it to appear on award: _____

Date Entry Shown: _____

Statement of Purpose: _____

Description of Production Process: format, type of equipment, personnel (volunteers or paid), preparation, editing (in-house or outside), location, etc. Include name of production company if applicable, and percent of professional personnel and volunteers used in production.

Results/Response:

I CERTIFY THAT THE WORK SUBMITTED IN THIS ENTRY IS MY PERSONAL WORK OR WAS DONE UNDER MY DIRECT SUPERVISION.

Signature: _____

ENTRIES SHOULD BE MAILED TO:

Farrell Blankenship, WTM Entry, 515 Mississippi Street, Jackson, MS 39201-1702

VBS Jumpstart

February 15, 2000
9 a.m. - noon

Alta Woods Baptist
Church
168 Colonial Drive,
Jackson



Take the plunge into...the fantastic good news.
Ocean Odyssey...
diving into the depths of God's faithfulness.

For all pastors, VBS directors,
VBS leaders to explore
an overview of the 2000 theme, Ocean Odyssey

The VBS Scuba Sampler and Curriculum will be
on display and available for purchase from
Jackson's LifeWay Christian Store.

Sponsored by the Sunday School Department
For more info call us at 1-800-748-1651 or (601)968-3800

Mississippi Baptist Camps 2000 Summer Staff Recruiting Schedule

College age applicants who are interested are encouraged to consider this avenue of ministry and service. Applications are being accepted for three different camps. Interviews will be conducted at various college campuses across Mississippi during February and March. The recruiting schedule is given below.

Central Hills Baptist Retreat *Royal Ambassador/Challenger Summer Camp*

Central Hills begins its summer program with lifeguard training for a select group on May 22. Staff Orientation will be from May 28 - June 2. Camp sessions begin June 12. There will be six weeks of Resident Camp for boys entering grades 4 - 12. There will be two Lad/Dad Weekend Camps. Each week begins on Sunday evening and concludes on Friday or Saturday afternoon.

Available positions include counselor, operations worker, and activity instructor. Activity instructor positions are: horseback riding, archery, riflery, handicrafts, camp craft skills, swimming, canoeing and a low-elements adventure/challenge ropes course.

Camp Garaywa *Girls Missions Camp*

What a wonderful opportunity for college age females with a heart for missions and working with children and youth.

Camp Garaywa begins its summer camping program on May 30 and ends on July 29. This includes the staff orientation and eight weeks of missions camping for 4th - 6th grade girls and one week for 7th - 12th grade girls.

Female cabin leaders are responsible for a cabin of girls each week. They plan and participate in Bible studies, cabin devotions, recreation, worship, campfires, special events, music, drama, etc.

Gulfshore Baptist Assembly *Senior Adult, Single, Youth, Music, Family*

and Adult Leadership Conferences
The assembly begins its summer program May 13, and continues until August 15.

Available positions include food services, Red Cross trained lifeguards, housekeeping, registration and office, first aid, and grounds and maintenance.

The assembly provides an interesting program of activities for the staff; and they have the opportunity for service as well as personal spiritual growth and development.

Date	College Campus	Time	Central Hills	Garaywa	Gulfshore
Tuesday, Feb. 15	East Central Community College, <i>BSU</i>	9:30-11:00 a.m.		x	
	Meridian Community College, <i>Meridian Hall</i>	noon-1:30 p.m.		x	
	Jones County Junior College, <i>BSU</i>	3:30-5:00 p.m.		x	
Wednesday, Feb. 16	Jeff Davis Campus, <i>BSU Center</i>	11:30-1:30 p.m.			x
Thursday, Feb. 17	Pearl River Community College, <i>BSU</i>	10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.			x
Monday, Feb. 21	Holmes Community College, <i>BSU Center</i>	10:00 a.m.- noon	x	x	x
	Miss. Delta Community College, <i>BSU</i>	1:30-3:00 p.m.	x	x	x
	Delta State, <i>BSU Center</i>	3:30-5:30 p.m.	x	x	x
Tuesday, Feb. 22	Northwest Miss. Community College, <i>BSU</i>	11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.	x	x	x
	Blue Mountain College, <i>BSU Center</i>	2:30-4:30 p.m.	x	x	x
	Ole Miss, <i>BSU Center</i>	6:00-8:30 p.m.	x	x	x
Wednesday, Feb. 23	Northeast Miss. Community College, <i>BSU</i>	9:00-10:30 a.m.		x	
	Miss. State University, <i>BSU Center</i>	11:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.	x		x
	Miss. State University, <i>BSU</i>	1:00-3:00 p.m.		x	
	Miss. University for Women, <i>BSU Center</i>	4:00-5:30 p.m.		x	
Thursday, Feb. 24	Northeast Miss. Community College, <i>BSU</i>	10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.	x		x
	Miss. University For Women, <i>BSU Center</i>	3:30-5:30 p.m.	x		x
Monday, Feb. 28	Hinds Community College, <i>BSU Center</i>	10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.	x	x	x
	Miss. College, <i>Rogers Student Center</i>	1:30-6:00 p.m.	x		x
Tuesday, Feb. 29	Co-Lin Community College, <i>BSU Center</i>	10:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m.	x		x
	East Central Community College, <i>BSU</i>	2:30-4:30 p.m.	x		x
Wednesday, Mar. 1	Meridian Community College, <i>Meridian Hall</i>	10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.	x		x
	Jones County Junior College, <i>BSU</i>	2:00-4:30 p.m.	x		x
Thursday, Mar. 2	William Carey College, <i>Crawford Hall BSU</i>	10:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m.	x	x	x
	University of Southern Miss., <i>BSU Center</i>	1:00-4:00 p.m.	x	x	x
Wednesday, Mar. 15	Co-Lin Community College, <i>BSU Center</i>	9:00-10:30 a.m.		x	
	Miss. College <i>BSU Center</i>	3:00-6:00 p.m.		x	
Thursday, March 23	Pearl River Community College, <i>BSU</i>	11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.		x	

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"The Cost of the Cross"

Mississippi Acteens
Convention (MAC)
March 3-5, Cost: \$20
William Carey College
Hattiesburg

Weekend Schedule

Friday
6 - 7:15 p.m. Registration
7:30 - 9:30 p.m. Opening Celebration

Saturday
9 - 10:45 a.m. Morning Celebration
11 a.m. - 3 p.m. Conferences, Lunch
7:30 - 9:30 p.m. Evening Celebration

Sunday
9 - 9:45 a.m. Conferences
10 - noon Closing Celebration

Contact WMU for more info: 968-3800
or 1-800-748-1651

State Singles Retreat

Gulfshore Baptist Assembly

May 27-29

(A-Unit \$92.80; C-Unit \$85.50)

- Mission trips to New Orleans and foreign ships
- Conferences
- Jamboree
- Night swimming
- T-shirt (reservation by May 1)
- Worship
- Fun trips
- Seafood banquet



"T.K. & Co."

Cindy Still
Missouri Singles
Consultant

Contact Discipleship and Family Ministry Department
for more info: 968-3800 or 1-800-748-1651.

"Finding Us Faithful As Seniors"

Senior Adult Retreats, Gulfshore
Baptist Assembly

Senior Adult I Retreat

May 15-17 (\$86.50)

Choir:

FBC, Brandon



Chuck Kelley

President, New Orleans Baptist Seminary

Senior Adult II Retreat

May 18-20 (\$86.50)

Choir:

Clarksdale BC, Clarksdale



Eugene Dobbs

Retired, Executive Assistant, MBCB

Senior Adult III Retreat

May 22-26 (\$155.50)

Choir:

Emmanuel BC, Grenada



Landrum P. Leavell III

Retired President, New Orleans Baptist Seminary

Conferences on depression, humor, "Share Jesus Without Fear," health, "Journey of Faith"

Join us for the seafood banquet; ice cream fellowships, and much more.

Register after March 1. Call Gulfshore Baptist Assembly,
Pass Christian, Miss., 1-228-452-7261

Contact Discipleship and Family Ministry Department
for more info: 968-3800 or 1-800-748-1651.

Family Week at Gulfshore

July 3-7

"Families Finding Faith"



John Yates, Clinton

Conferences:

- **TeamKids** (preschool and children)
- **Mini-Centrifuge** - Harvey Ellis, MBCB
Ronney Joe Webb, Laurel
- **Couples** - led by Dr. and Mrs. Chuck Kelley,
president of New Orleans Baptist Seminary
- **Single-Parenting** - led by James Haynes, Biloxi
- **Power of Faith** - led by Bill Causey, Clinton

Register after March 1st - Deposit: \$40 per person or \$80 per family
Call 1-228-452-7261 to make reservations.

Contact Discipleship and Family Ministry Department for more info:
968-3800 or 1-800-748-1651.

New Choices In



SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR A NEW CENTURY CURRICULUM WORKSHOPS

Sunday School for a New Century will involve releasing new Bible study curriculum choices (available from the Fall 2000 Quarter) designed to assist churches as they seek to see more lives transformed through the gospel. Through these series of workshops we will interpret and help prepare your church for these exciting changes. This conference is for pastors, staff, Sunday School directors, and key age group leadership.

Dates	Sponsoring Association/s	Location	Time
1/24	Gulf Coast	Gulf Coast Associational Center, Gulfport	7:00-9:00 p.m.
1/24	Lebanon	Carterville Baptist Church, Petal	6:30-8:30 p.m.
1/25	Neshoba	Neshoba Baptist Center, Philadelphia	7:00-9:00 p.m.
1/31	North Central & Yalobusha	Friendship Baptist Church, Grenada	7:00-8:30 p.m.
1/31	Tri-County	Tri-County Associational Office, Columbia	7:00-9:00 p.m.
2/1	Covington-Jeff Davis	Covington-Jeff Davis Associational Center Collins	7:00-9:00 p.m.
2/1	George-Greene	FBC, Leakesville	7:00-9:00 p.m.
2/3	Simpson	Simpson Associational Office, Mendenhall	7:00-9:00 p.m.
2/3	Wayne	Overstreet's Catfish House, Waynesboro	6:30-8:30 p.m.
2/17	Adams-Union & Franklin	FBC, Natchez	7:00-9:00 p.m.
2/21	Calhoun & Webster	Calhoun Associational Center, Calhoun City	7:00-8:30 p.m.
2/22	Tishomingo	Tishomingo Baptist Church, Tishomingo	7:00-9:00 p.m.
2/28	Carroll-Montgomery	FBC, Winona	7:00-9:00 p.m.
2/29	Mississippi	East Fork Baptist Church, Smithdale	7:00-8:30 p.m.
3/2	Monroe	Monroe Baptist Associational Office, Becker	6:30-8:30 p.m.
3/14	Newton	Conehatta Baptist Church, Conehatta	7:00-9:00 p.m.
3/16	Prentiss & Alcorn	Gaston Baptist Church, Booneville	7:00-9:00 p.m.
3/16	Leake	West Carthage Baptist Church, Carthage	7:00-9:00 p.m.
3/18	Lee & Itawamba	West Jackson St. Baptist Church, Tupelo	9:30-11:30 a.m.
3/20	Lauderdale	Westwood Baptist Church, Meridian	7:00-9:00 p.m.
3/21	Lincoln & Franklin	Pleasant Grove Baptist Church, Brookhaven	7:00-9:00 p.m.
3/23	Golden Triangle	West End Baptist Church, West Point	7:00-8:30 p.m.
3/23	Northwest & Panola	FBC, Senatobia	6:30-8:30 p.m.
3/27	Pike	N. McComb, McComb	6:30-8:00 p.m.
3/27	Washington	Washington Associational Office, Greenville	7:00-9:00 p.m.
3/28	Union County	TBA	7:00-9:00 p.m.
4/14-15	State S S Dept.	Park Place Baptist Church, Brandon	5:00 p.m. -14th noon - 15th
5/02	Jackson	FBC, Gautier	6:30-8:30 p.m.

For more information, call the State Sunday School Department.
1-800-748-1651 or (601)968-3800

Pray this day for...

February 11-24, 2000

Prayer Ministry Office • P.O. Box 530 • Jackson, MS 39205-0530 • Phone 968-3800, Ext. 3904 • Mississippi PrayerLine 1-800-787-PRAY

Be Prayerful About Anything! - "God may allow us to get into a predicament so that we will diligently seek His face and wait upon Him."
S.D. Gordon

Race Relations Sunday (Christian Action Commission Emphasis). Many people are realizing that God's love cuts across racial, ethnic and socioeconomic barriers. Pray that God will take away all prejudice and discrimination.

Pray for "Project Taipei," a plan to plant thousands of new churches in this city of three million people. Give thanks for two members of a Chinese Baptist Church in Oklahoma who are moving back to Taipei and are praying about joining this project.

For (1) WMU Focus Week (WMU Emphasis), (2) Sports evangelism teams will be going to Malaysia in March. Pray for the teenage boys who they will be coaching and with whom they will be playing basketball. Pray that many will accept Christ as Lord and Savior.

There are approximately 43 million Japanese people among the "mid-middle" class. Although the official religions of Japan are Buddhism and Shintoism, the true religion of most is materialism. Pray for God to open the hearts of these people to the true riches of His love.

For (1) Vacation Bible School JumpStart, Alta Woods BC, Jackson (Sunday School), (2) Pray for the new believer in Dagaari of Burkina Faso, who is very ill and whose family refuses to help him.

For (1) Sunday School Growth Seminar, FBC, Starkville (Sunday School), (2) Please pray today for Prime Minister Sheikh Saad Al Abdullah Al Salim of Kuwait.

Pray for this new Hakka Christian couple in Taiwan. Recently they had a party for the wife's 51st birthday. The husband told the guests, which included non-Christians, that he was now a Christian. He prayed, thanking God for his wife and all his friends.

Erick Spivey is a special ministries missionary in Ridgeland, S.C. Pray for spring ministries at the Family Circle Cup, a tennis tournament on Hilton Head Island. Ask the Lord to provide campground chaplains to serve in a state park from spring through the fall.

For Church Music Conference, North Oxford BC, Oxford (Church Music), (2) Chiao-Feng Ju works with Asian church planting in Boulder, Colo. Pray for him and others who lead Bible studies and fellowship with students at Colorado University.

For (1) Directors of Missions Interpretation, Camp Garaywa (Missions Extension), (2) Despite the publication of 23 million Bibles in China in the last 15 years, there is still a need for at least one billion more.

Pray for revival among students and teachers at Mobasa Baptist High School in Kenya. Pray for innovative ideas for chapel and discipleship programs, so that God would be glorified and people would be encouraged to walk more intimately with Him.

For (1) Churchmen Retreat, John W. Kyle State Park, Sardis (Church Music), (2) African American Church Leadership Institute, Grace Temple BC, Gulfport (Strategic Initiatives).

For (1) GA/Acteens Campus Day, Mississippi College (WMU) (2) Pray for some believers in West Sumatra who are facing prison sentences following false accusations. Continue to pray for leaders of the Minangkabau Church, Indonesia, as they await appeals.

For (1) Church Weekday Education Clinic, Highland BC, Meridian (Discipleship & Family Ministry), (2) Pray for Christian radio programs in Africa. For two years a man listened to them with the result that his whole family now believes in Jesus.



Christian
Performing
Arts
Festival
with Church
Recreation and Youth
Leader Conferences

March 24-25, 2000
First Baptist Church
Brandon • Cost \$25

For more information, contact
Discipleship & Family Ministry Department
(601)968-3800 or 1-800-748-1651



Life is not made up of
the things we own.
Luke 12:15

2 great dates for
OLDER CHILDREN'S
RETREATS 2000

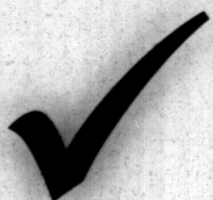
(completed grades 4-6)

July 6-8
Central Hills
Baptist Retreat
Kosciusko
Cost: \$80

July 20-22
Gulfshore
Baptist Assembly
Pass Christian
Cost: \$78

• Worship • Bible Study
• Track Time
• Church Talent Show

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HOUSE TOPS

NAMES IN THE NEWS



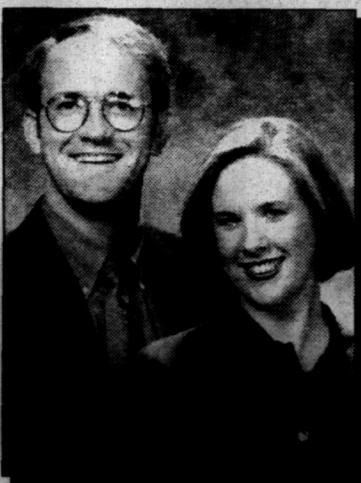
Winstead and Lay

Springfield Church, Morton, recently licensed Michael Winstead to the ministry. Winstead, son of Kendell and Jan Winstead of Morton, is a graduate of Mississippi State University. During the past four summers, he served on the staff at Central Hills in Kosciusko. Pictured (from left) are Winstead and Frank Lay, pastor.

his wife of 60 years, Robbie Wheeler of Batesville; daughters, Joan Griffin and Joyce Ware of Batesville, and Mackie Detton of Sardis; adopted son, James Hancock of Cleveland, Tenn.; eight grandchildren; and 10 great-grandchildren.

Orbie W. Wheeler, 81, died at his home in Batesville on Jan. 20. Funeral services were held on Jan. 22 at Calvary Church in Batesville. Wheeler surrendered to preach in 1954, serving churches in Panola, Tunica, and Tallahatchie associations. Wheeler was a graduate of Clarke College.

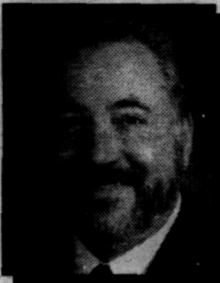
He is survived by



The Purvises

Strong River Church, Pinola; and minister of music at Vaiden Church.

Victor Walsh was ordained Jan. 9 at Central Church, McComb. In recent years the McComb dentist has served several local churches as interim pastor.



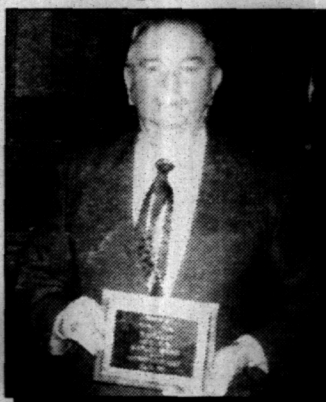
Walsh

He is currently serving for the second time as interim pastor of Central Church. Walsh also directs the handbell musicians at Centenary United Methodist Church.



Burke and Moak

Clear Branch Church, Wesson, licensed Guy Burke to the ministry on Dec. 12. Burke is available to supply preach and can be reached at (601) 835-1735. Pictured (from left) are Burke and Wayne Moak, pastor.



Watts

Carroll Watts was recently honored at Friendship Church, Lincoln Association, for 50 years of service as church treasurer and deacon.



Westwood Church, Meridian, recently honored two of its deacons with plaques of appreciation as part of Deacon Emphasis Week. Clyde Moffett has served for 37 years and Bobby Cooper has served for 35 years. Pictured (from left) are Richie Davis, pastor; Moffett; and Cooper.



A group of 12 from Mt. Olive Church, Tippah County, traveled to Atlanta, Ga., on Dec. 29 and participated in the life-changing event of Youth Link 2000. The group also worked at the new clothes closet and food pantry of First Church, Avondale, Ga. Those who participated were Daniel Paganelli, Alicia Paganelli, David Page, Amber Jordan, Justin Johnson, Scott Hudson, Jennifer Hudson, Laycie Johnson, Brenda Paganelli, Daniel Binford, Pam Page, and Julie Holcomb.

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Mississippi's Steeles topping gospel charts

By Stacey Hamby
Missouri Word&Way

Before they became a household name in gospel music, the Steeles were like many Baptists. Jeff Steele was a pastor in rural Mississippi. He and his wife, Sherry, were raising three children. They sang together as a family — but life took a sudden turn when Jeff Steele gave up being a pastor to take the family on the road and sing gospel music full time.

"We had two No. 1 songs before I ever left the church for full-time gospel music," Steele said. "I had no idea God was calling us to the forefront of a culture war. I had no idea there was a culture war."

That culture war is what the Steeles' signature song addresses. "We Want America Back" — named Song of the Year in 1997 in the Singing News — was written to call a nation to repentance, Steele said.

"The response to that song was so overwhelming," he recalled. "It took us far beyond Southern gospel music to places where Southern gospel is not usually heard. We've sung it in Washington, D.C., the Alabama state capitol, college campuses, and TV stations. There were some country radio stations that played the song, and it became No. 1 at those stations," he said.

Daywind Music Group president Ed Leonard said Jeff Steele's writing talent is one of the most renowned in the industry.

"The Steeles have enjoyed tremendous achievements and success as artists, but beyond the awards and honors lies a greater mission," he said. "They have a heart for today's family, and they continually go the dis-

tance to see that they are obedient in obeying their call to challenge and encourage families."

The success of "We Want America Back" turned Steele's head, he now admits.

"All the awards, sales — I got my eyes on all that stuff, and lost my focus," he said. "I

has happened to our children?" Jeff Steele is asking, "Where are the parents?"

"I was prompted by the Holy Spirit to write 'For the Sake of My Children' in response to what I was seeing going on in America," he said.

The song's message is meant

Steele explained, "Since our message is so strong and we do call people to a decision, I got real uncomfortable drawing a rope around the church and saying, 'If you can buy a ticket, you can come in here and hear the truth.' God has been faithful to meet our needs. This is ministry only."

As part of these rallies, Steele conducts private meetings with parents to show them the lyrics to today's most popular rock songs. He also addresses concerns over country music, video games, and movies. Steele said he was the first one who had to clean house. "I used to like to watch wrestling on TV with my son, but I can't do that any more," he said. "God is not obligated to answer one single prayer offered up from a home which he calls holy where his name is cursed through the TV set, and we're paying for it."

Though he's calling Christian parents to assume their responsibilities for their homes, Steele insists he's not a legalist. "If so, I'd be preaching all this holiness as a means to keep salvation," he said, "but I'm preaching it as a means to keep America together, homes together, kids safe."

"I try not to compromise the truth, but the truth is what's controversial."

When the Steele family isn't on the road, they attend College Heights Church in Gallatin, Tenn. The couple's three children — Christy, 15, Kayla, 11, and Bradley, 6 — are home schooled. Christy sings with the family full time, and the younger children make special appearances. Another member of the group is Paul Ladd.

For a schedule or booking information, visit the Steeles' web site at www.steelesministries.com

Editor's note: This article replaces the article published in the February 3 edition of the Baptist Record, in which the Steele family photograph was erroneously identified and published with an unrelated story. The Baptist Record regrets the error.



The Steeles (from left): Christy, Kayla, Jeff, Bradley, Sherry; and group member Paul Ladd.

promised God, if he gave me another vehicle like this, I'd not lose my focus."

God did give Steele another song. "For the Sake of My Children" already stands at No. 5 on the Singing News chart.

As opposed to the usual question society asks, "What

to call parents back to their responsibility in raising their children. "I don't blame the kids for what's happened," Steele said. "God said for them to obey their parents. Parents have abandoned the guidebook for their homes. We're not called to be friends, we're called to be parents."

The Steeles are taking that message to cities across the nation, leading "We Want America Back for the Sake of the Children" rallies.

Unlike regular gospel music concerts, they conduct these without charging admission.

Historical Commission sets Anniversary Workshop

The Mississippi Baptist Historical Commission's Church Anniversary Workshop will be held on Feb. 19 at First Church, Clinton. The workshop will be for churches celebrating 100, 125, 150, 175, and 200th anniversaries during the years 2000, 2001, and 2002. The times are 9:30 a.m. with registration until 3:30 p.m. For more information call (601) 925-3434. E-mail: mbhc@mc.edu.

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FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH — Seeking part-time minister of music. Please send resumes to First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 347, Coldwater, MS 38618. Attention: Search Committee.

PART-TIME MUSIC DIRECTOR and full-time Youth Director needed at Trinity Baptist Church of Rankin County. Please contact Rev. Kenny Goff at 601-939-6622 for more information if interested.

NEW SIGHT BAPTIST CHURCH — Searching for full-time associate pastor with emphasis in youth, activities, and pastoral care ministries. Mail resume to Johnny Sykes, 2404 New Sight Dr., Brookhaven, MS 39601.

RICHBURG BAPTIST CHURCH in Hattiesburg, Mississippi is prayerfully seeking a new Pastor. Please send resume to: Attention Pulpit Committee, P.O. Box 15492, Hattiesburg, MS 39404 or 105 Epley Road, Sumrall, MS 39482.

CHURCH SECRETARY - Walker Hill Baptist Church, Brandon, MS. Part-time, 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., M-F. Call Bro. Robert Netterville 601-825-6210.

Margaret Lackey goals surpassed

First Church, Terry, exceeded its goal of \$2,000 for Margaret Lackey Offering for State Missions by giving a total of \$2,170.64. John H. Pace is pastor.

Wayside Church, Vicksburg, exceeded its goal of \$600 for State Missions Offering by giving \$831.10. Larry W. Haggard is pastor.

Gulfshore Assembly deposit set to increase

PASS CHRISTIAN (Special) — The deposit required for reservations at Gulfshore Assembly in Pass Christian, a Mississippi Baptist campground, has increased from \$30 to \$40 per person effective this season, according to assembly manager Frank Simmons.

Deposits are due with the reservation applications for any of the conferences sponsored by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB). Deposits can be made by check, and by MasterCard or Visa Card, Simmons added.

Reservations must be postmarked March 1 or later, he said. All reservations are on a first come, first served basis.

Simmons pointed out that the renovation of Gulfshore is still in progress. The "C" wing and auditorium renovations were completed in the spring of 1999.

The "A" wing and the waterfront are scheduled for work this spring, while the cafeteria and kitchen areas are to be renovated in the fall of 2000.

For information on accommodations and reservations at Gulfshore Assembly, contact Simmons at 100 First Street, Pass Christian, MS 39571. Telephone (228) 452-7261.

For information about specific programs, see the chart at right and contact the appropriate department

at the P. O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone (601) 968-3800, or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651.

Some listed programs contain telephone numbers for LifeWay Christian resources of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Gulfshore Assembly 2000 program schedule and contact numbers

(To contact a listed MBCB department from outside Jackson, dial toll-free (800) 748-1651 and enter last three digits as the extension number when prompted. LifeWay numbers excluded.)

DATES	CONFERENCE	DEPARTMENT	PHONE
May 15-17	I Senior Adult Conf.	Discipleship & Family Mins.	601-292-3283
May 18-20	II Senior Adult Conf.	Discipleship & Family Mins.	601-292-3283
May 22-26	III Senior Adult Conf.	Discipleship & Family Mins.	601-292-3283
May 27-29	Single Adult Conf.	Discipleship & Family Mins.	601-292-3283
May 29-June 2	I Youth Conf.	Sunday School Dept.	601-292-3295
June 2-6	II Youth Conf.	Sunday School Dept.	601-292-3295
June 6-10	III Youth Conf.	Sunday School Dept.	601-292-3295
June 10-14	IV Youth Conf.	Sunday School Dept.	601-292-3295
June 15-19	V Youth Conf.	Sunday School Dept.	601-292-3295
June 19-23	VI Youth Conf.	Sunday School Dept.	601-292-3295
June 23-27	Young Musicians Conf.	Church Music	601-292-3267
June 27-July 1	HeartSong - Youth Music Conf.	Church Music	601-292-3267
July 3-7	Family Enrichment Conf.	Discipleship & Family Mins.	601-292-3283
July 8-13	I Centrifuge (closed)	LifeWay, Nashville	877-226-7123
July 13-15	Music Leadership Conf.	Church Music	601-292-3267
July 15-20	II Centrifuge (closed)	LifeWay, Nashville	877-226-7123
July 20-22	Older Children Conf.	Sunday School Dept.	601-292-3294
July 22-27	III Centrifuge (closed)	LifeWay, Nashville	877-226-7123
July 27-29	I Growing Churches	Discipleship & Family Mins.	601-292-3283
July 27-29	Church Media Library	Dept. Broadcast Services	601-292-3378
July 29-Aug 3	IV Centrifuge (open)	LifeWay, Nashville	877-226-7123
Aug. 11-12	Pastors & Wives Retreat	Church Admins. Dept.	601-292-3305

Revival dates

Bala Chitto, Magnolia: Feb. 11-13; Celebration 2000 revival weekend; Michael and Crystal Mason, Decatur, Ala., guest leaders; Fri., preaching at 7 p.m.; Sat., breakfast served at 9 a.m., conferences at 10 a.m., and Mason concert, 7 p.m.; Sunday, Sunday School, 10 a.m. and worship at 11 a.m.; for more information, call Dave Hartson, pastor, at (601) 783-6670.

Friendship, Aberdeen: Feb. 20-23; Sunday, Sunday School at 9:45 a.m., worship, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Mickey Dalrymple, Columbus, evangelist; John Bailey, Hot Springs, Ark., music; Todd Bowen, pastor.

World Vision lists 10 'global hot spots' for 2000

WASHINGTON (ABP) — An African "Arc of Conflict," Sri Lanka and Chechnya/Russia are among the 10 most politically unstable "global hot spots" for 2000, according to an international-aid organization.

"These conflicts will tend to remain on our annual list unless and until the international community significantly increases its efforts to resolve them," said Serge Duss, director of public policy and government relations for World Vision in a December press release.

What Duss calls the African "Arc of Conflict" includes the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Republic of Congo, a border dispute between Ethiopia and Eritrea, Sudan, and Somalia.

Those countries, along with Colombia and Indonesia, are "hold-over hot spots" from last year's list, Duss said.

World Vision described causes for instability in eight of the areas they named:

- Montenegro is on the list because a planned referendum for independence there could develop conflict between those wanting to keep the republic under Yugoslav control and those wanting independence.

- Similar tension exists between Russia and Chechnya. Russian military recently gained control of the Chechnyan capital of Grozny, threatening the stability of surrounding areas that cannot accommodate the more than 200,000 Chechnyan refugees.

- A 16-year-old civil war in Sri Lanka between the Sinhalese government and the ethnic Tamil Liberation Tigers has resulted in 55,000 killed and another 800,000 displaced.

- In Indonesia, East Timor is struggling to form a new gov-

ernment. There are growing social and political troubles in Aceh and an economic crisis in the nation overall.

- In Angola, civil war has left an estimated one million citizens dead and 1.7 million displaced.

- More than 20,000 have been killed in Sierra Leone and more than 700,000 displaced as a result of nine years of civil war there.

- Conflict between a Muslim north and Christian south is causing conflict in Nigeria, and the nation's transition to democracy is unstable.

The areas in the African "Arc of Conflict" will likely remain unstable in 2000, according to World Vision:

- Democratic Republic of Congo: A truce signed in July has been violated by all seven countries.

- Republic of Congo: While more than 500,000 have been displaced, nearly 15,000 have died just in 1999.

- Ethiopia/Eritrea: A border dispute continues. There are reports of forced emigration

and ethnic cleansing in both countries."

- Somalia/Somaliland: An inoperative government and clan warfare over much of the country has more than 300,000 people facing starvation.

- Sudan: Civil war for nearly four decades has created continuous conflict, now spreading into neighboring countries.

This is the second year for the annual listing of global hot spots by World Vision, a Christian humanitarian organization that focuses on helping the poor.

STAFF CHANGES

North Morton Church, Scott Association, called Gary A. Wyatt as pastor effective Nov. 28, 1999. A native of Tuscaloosa, Ala., Wyatt received his education from William Carey College and attended Southwestern Seminary. His previous place of service was Mount Zion Church, Leake Association.

Timothy Daniel Lee was

called as minister of youth and education at Clarke Venable Memorial Church, Decatur, effective Jan. 30. Lee received his education at William Carey College and New Orleans Seminary. He previously served at Big Ridge Church, Biloxi.



Lee

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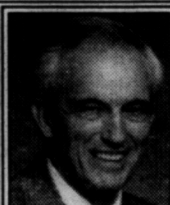


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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Unsigned letters will not be printed. No multi-copy or form letters will be used.

Each correspondent must include an address and telephone number for verification. In special instances, name may be withheld at writer's request and editor's discretion.

Please include the name of cooperating Mississippi Baptist church where correspondent is a member. (Mississippi Baptists' letters will receive priority when space is limited.)

Letters must be limited to 250 words. All correspondence is subject to editing.

Correspondents should refrain from personal attacks. The opinions expressed in letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect the views of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

No more than one letter from any individual will be printed during a three-month period.

When in the judgement of the editor a given issue has received sufficient attention, correspondence dealing with it will no longer be published and a notice will be printed to that effect.

TARGETING GROUPS

Editor:

I respectfully disagree with Dr. Billy Graham. It is not necessarily wrong to target specific groups in evangelism. If you look at the history of Southern Baptists you will discover that certain groups of people have been targeted before. For example, the Indians were a primary interest in the West for years, and still are to a certain degree. What was wrong with that?

Today, when the Southern Baptist missionaries are sent abroad, in essence they are sent to deal with specific groups of people. What is wrong with that? Biblically, there is nothing wrong with targeting a particular group in ministry. John the Baptist was sent to the Jews and Paul was sent to the Gentiles and, by the way, who would tell Jesus that he was wrong in being sent to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel?"

One may be able to argue about the method of ministry, but to say that it is wrong to single out a group to which to minister the love of God is absurd. In our ministry to the world the opportunity may arise to specify certain truths to certain people.

Walter Butler
Columbus

MUCH IS REQUIRED

Editor:

In reference to the "Advice Offered" letter to the editor on January 20, and a mother church receiving funds from the convention to start a mission church, a critical question is raised which could ultimately determine our very future existence as a denomination — the issue of autonomy vs accountability.

Southern Baptists have traditionally held autonomy very dear to our hearts and for good Biblical reason, allowing each local church the freedom to follow the divine teaching of God's Word given the "priesthood of the believer," without threat of dictatorship from any outside hierarchical authority. Praise the Lord!

However, in Luke 12:48 Jesus said, "to whom much is given, much is required," or as the old saying goes "with freedom comes responsibility." If the mother church in question wishes to enjoy total freedom to fund the mission by borrowing money (which violates Scripture) without permission from or accountability to the

denomination, she must assume sole financial responsibility for the mission herself.

As this dear member asked, obviously this mother church and each local Southern Baptist church enjoy the autonomy to control her own finances, but when she accepts the financial assistance of the denomination's 40,000 other churches, she assumes accountability to them before the Lord for her decisions.

Likewise, this mother church and each local Southern Baptist church obviously has the right to change denominations if she feels God leading her, but she must also understand she accepts responsibility to forfeit the spiritual, emotional, and material benefits of her denominational affiliation.

Stephen G. Forfer
Forest

WRONG IMPRESSION

Editor:

Walk to Emmaus, Cursillo, and Tres Dias are movements for renewal in the church and are designed to strengthen and renew one's faith. I attended a Roman Catholic Cursillo and as a United Methodist pastor, have worked on Walk to Emmaus. Members of the church I currently pastor, who have attended Walk to Emmaus, have returned more excited about their relationship with God, eager to share their experiences with others, and have become more dedicated to our church's ministries. The weekend is not a "quick fix" as Mr. Davis said. These have been lasting, long term results.

These weekends are not secretive. People are encouraged to share their experiences but not to reveal all of the details. There are many surprises which serve as vehicles to provide blessings for participants. We ask these details not be revealed so that others will have the same opportunity to be surprised and blessed.

These movements have been instrumental in my own Christian growth as well as the spiritual growth of our church. I would hate for people to develop the wrong impression of these movements from the negative Baptist Press article in the Jan. 13 Baptist Record.

Michael's Watch



But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, "The Lord rebuke you." - Jude 1:9

Michael's Watch is a support group whose sole purpose and mission is to offer emotional, mental, and spiritual support for those whose lives have been affected by family members or loved ones involved in the homosexual lifestyle.

Michael's Watch Group meets the 2nd and 4th Sunday each month at First Baptist Church in Louisville, Mississippi from 3:00 - 4:30 p.m.

Additional information may be obtained by calling First Baptist Church in Louisville, Mississippi at (662) 773-6246.

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More information can be found from the Cokesbury Christian bookstore or at the following web sites: Cursillo-www.iquest.net/%7Ewtred/cursillo.htm; Walk to Emmaus-www.upperroom.org; Tres Dias-www.tresdias.org.

Rodney Dobbs
Canaan, VT

EMMAUS CHANGES LIVES

Editor:

In response to the article by Baptist Press in The Baptist Record on January 13 entitled, "NAMB official cautions churches to be wary" — it is true that the origin of the movement was by the Roman Catholic Church, but my God is able to take "evil" and bring good out of it. (Romans 8:28) It is true that even our Baptist conferences and retreats have resulted in "far out" activities such as noted in the article.

The Emmaus Walk is not restricted to the Methodist but is for anyone who desires to participate. The North Mississippi Christian Camp, Grenada, is doing a marvelous ministry. I had reservations until I experienced the Walk.

There I found Christian doctrine and fellowship par excellence. The essence of the retreat is confession, the lordship of Jesus Christ with the Bible as the sole source of authority. The pilgrim is instructed and encouraged to return home to love his/her pastor, to become active and supportive of his/her local church and flesh out Biblical Christianity in daily life.

There is a waiting list of over 300. Many pilgrims have had saving experiences, repented and been renewed, and churches have been renewed. Wouldn't it be great if some of our Baptist conferences and retreats would result in changed lives and commitments?

My Bible says: "Beloved, let us love one another for love is

from God and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. The one who does not love, does not know God for God is love (1 John 4:7-8).

W. D. Kirk
Doddsville

APPRECIATES EMMAUS

Editor:

I am writing in response to the article in The Baptist Record the week of January 13, titled: NAMB official cautions churches to be wary."

I want to tell those who read that article that I appreciate the Emmaus contribution to my life.

When I attended a 72-hour retreat, I had been a Christian for 73 years and very active in different Southern Baptist Churches. I am now a member of First Church, Coffeeville, serving as needed to glorify the Lord.

For three days at the retreat I was challenged to remember the Father God we serve and that he is actively at work in our world to complete his plan of the ages.

I was reminded we are empowered by the Holy Spirit, given us by Jesus, to witness to the wonders of our redemption that others might believe, and to never forget and project our Savior has gone to heaven after finishing his mission to bring all believers to salvation. Yet he is watching out and preparing for us to live eternally with him.

Since my retreat I have worked three retreats and been blessed beyond belief. I served two weekends in the prayer room. I can testify that the Holy Spirit led all the way to glorify our wonderful Savior in each of these weekends and all others.

Faithful Southern Baptist Christians play an important role in all weekends, including Baptist pastors. Some of them serve on Southern Baptist Convention committees.

Maye Murphree Landreth
Coffeeville

stewartsigns.com

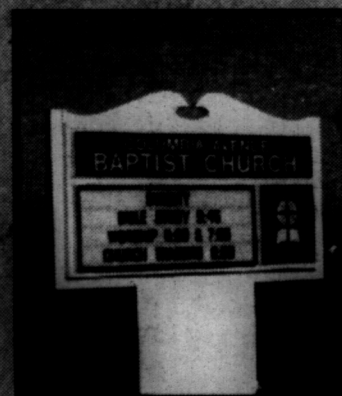
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By Lynn Jones

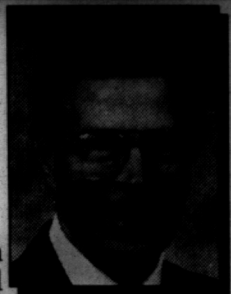
During my years of attending school, I took many tests. Sometimes I did not study as I should have. I can still remember how I felt as I entered the room to take the test on such occasions. I was nervous and insecure. I knew that there were many sections of the material that I did not know, and this caused my feeling of insecurity.

On the other hand, there were times when I was very well prepared for the test. On those occasions, I entered the room with a sense of ease and eager expectation. I knew that I was prepared to answer any question that the teacher might ask.

Being prepared for Jesus'

return can give you a deep sense of joy and anticipation. When you have prepared for his return, then you know that whenever he returns you will be ready to meet him. Jesus told two parables about the importance of being prepared.

Be responsible (24:45-51). Jesus told about a servant who had demonstrated his faithfulness and wisdom. In recognition of that fact, the head of the house elevated the servant to the position of ruler or steward over his household. Jesus said that if that servant continued to show that kind of faithfulness and wisdom in the absence of the owner, the owner upon his return would reward the ser-



Jones

vant with expanded opportunities for service. The way to serve in larger positions of responsibility is to serve faithfully in small positions of responsibility. As you demonstrate faithfulness in your life, the Lord will give you expanded opportunities for service. Jesus said, on the other hand, that the servant appointed to a significant position may demonstrate just the opposite characteristics. He may reason that the master would not return for a long time and would begin to mistreat those around him and to spend all of his time with drunkards. By doing so, he would demonstrate his real character as an "evil servant" (v. 48). The owner's return would surprise him, and he would be cast into everlasting punishment with other hypocrites.

When Jesus returns, those who have demonstrated by

their lifestyles that they are evil will be cut off from God forever. Those who have demonstrated their commitment to Christ by faithful living will be rewarded. We don't know what the world is coming to, but we know who is coming to the world. We need to be ready to meet him.

Be ready (25:1-13). In Jesus' second parable, he told about 10 bridesmaids who had been invited to participate in a wedding ceremony. The Jewish custom was that the bridegroom would come to the home of the bride unannounced to get her and her attendants for the wedding. They would then go in procession to the home of the groom. Everyone was required to have a light in order to join the procession. All ten of the bridesmaids had olive oil lamps, but only five of them had made the right preparation by bringing extra oil. When the bridegroom arrived at midnight, the five bridesmaids who were prepared

experienced the joy of participating in the wedding procession and the wedding ceremony.

The foolish bridesmaids discovered that their lamps were going out and that they had no more oil. As a result of their lack of preparation, they were not allowed to join the wedding procession. By the time they had bought some oil and had gone to the house of the bridegroom, the door was shut, and they were not allowed to enter.

Jesus said that we do not know the time of his return. Because of this, we should be vigilant and prepared.

A cartoon showed a man reading a large sign that said, "Prepare to meet the Lord." The man was smoothing his hair and straightening his tie. Actually, our preparation must be deeper than that. It involves receiving Jesus Christ as our Savior and waiting expectantly for his return.

Jones is pastor of First Church, Booneville.

LIFE AND WORK

Expectations of faithfulness

Revelation 2:1-5, 12-16, 18-22

By Michael Jones

Our lesson last week was on the reason why we are to be faithful. Today we will explore the expectations God has for his churches and us as individuals to be faithful.

Sometimes, as churches and individuals, we may not really know how to express our faithfulness. What attitude should we have toward others who have different beliefs, different ethical opinions, and different moral practices?

We want to be faithful and obey God's Word while at the same time express God's love toward all people. So what expectations does God have for

us when he calls us to be faithful?

Right convictions, loving spirit (vv. 1-5). The Lord begins his address to the church at Ephesus with words of approval. He describes them as laboring for his name, being patient, not being able to bear those who are evil, and persevering and not becoming weary. They had the right convictions.

The Lord then gives his accusation toward the church; "You have left your first love." They lacked a loving spirit. Warren Wiersbe, in his commentary on this passage states: "They displayed works... labor... and



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patience, but these qualities were not motivated by a love for Christ." Unless they repented, they would face judgement.

While it was commendable for the church to labor for the Lord and stand by their convictions and not "bear those who are evil," it was not acceptable for them to lose the spirit of love which comes from God. As churches and as individuals we can not get so obsessed with doing right that we lose our spirit of love.

External steadfastness, internal vigilance (vv. 12-16). Once again the Lord begins with words of approval. The church at Pergamum was approved for their strong stand for Christ in the middle of an evil society. Their stand was so strong that it even led to death in some instances. In other words, they had an external steadfastness.

Once again the approval is

followed by an accusation. The accusation was that they had no internal vigilance. They had concentrated so much effort in the stand against the outside forces, internally they had allowed compromises to be made which were contrary to vital convictions of the faith.

In the same manner, we need to be steadfast against the external influences which we encounter in the world, but God also calls us to have an internal vigilance in our church and in our own lives. This vigilance is to make sure we don't focus so much effort on the outside that we forget the inside.

Good works, sound teaching (vv. 18-22). Again, our Lord begins his address with words of approval. The church at Thyatira was commended for their good works. They had love, unlike the church at Ephesus, they served diligently, and were patient. They also faced an accusation. They had allowed unsound teaching to

enter the church. They had tolerated one who deceived others into immoral practices. This invited judgement not only on the person deceiving but also on the church.

A spirit of love must be present in our lives and in the lives of our churches. If not, we will be just as guilty as the church at Ephesus. This however, does not mean we should be tolerant of actions or teachings which misrepresent Christ and lead others away. God calls us to good works, as a loving spirit, but to also have sound teaching.

So what are the expectations God has for us to be faithful both individually and in our churches? It is one of balance. To have right convictions but a loving spirit. To be externally steadfast yet internally vigilant. To do good works but to also practice sound teaching.

Jones is associate pastor/youth minister at Monticello Church, Monticello.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Be alert

2 John 1-13

By Carl M. White

John's second epistle affords the modern Christian a brief glimpse of life in the early church. While some want to spiritualize this letter as one between churches, saying the "chosen lady" of verse 1 and the "chosen sister" of verse 13 are veiled references to churches, many commentators believe this letter is exactly what it appears to be — a personal note between friends.

John covers no new theological ground here. The themes of this short letter are all found in more detail in the first letter. The importance of 2 John is that this personal note indicates how passionate John felt about the themes of love, obedience,

and warnings against false teachers.

A personal note (vv. 1-3). The writer identifies himself as the elder, or presbuteros. It is obvious the recipient knows who the writer is. Who, though, is the recipient, this "chosen lady?" We cannot know for certain, but the word translated "lady" could also be the name Kuria, according to some early commentators. Who ever she is, John knew her well, loved her family, and sent this very personal letter to her.

Pastoral advice (vv. 4-6). As an elder in the church of Christ, John is pleased to learn that this woman's children are growing in the faith. As the early church sprang upon the Roman world,



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family was of central importance. The same is true today. Though times have changed, the family still remains the best place for evangelism and discipleship to happen.

John commends her for passing on the truth to her children, and urges even more that they all walk in the truth. For John, two legs are used for walking in the truth. They are love and obedience.

The love command, John says, is foundational. He says it comes from the beginning. Many take this to mean that the very foundation of Christianity is as expressed in John 3:16, "For God so loved the world..."

Pastoral warning (vv. 7-13). In verse eight John warns her to be on guard because of false teachers. The word "deceivers" in verse seven is found in verb form several times in 1 John. It means one who leads others astray. John identifies the doctrine where these deceivers are

in error: the nature of Christ.

He warns against those "who do not acknowledge Christ in the flesh." (vs. 7) A form of false teaching was already taking shape in the Roman world which denied the incarnation. Jesus was a god who just looked like a man, they would say. The Gospels, however, teach otherwise. Jesus was God incarnate, or God in the flesh.

John goes so far as to say this teaching is the dividing line between those who are truly Christian and those who are not. So in verse 10, John advises this lady to not allow such false teachers in her house.

This is where we catch a glimpse of life among the first and second century church.

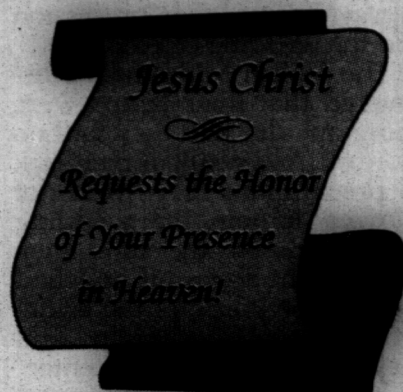
Early Christians traveled frequently, taking advantage of the good Roman system of roads. Evidence of this is found in Paul's letter to Rome, where in chapter 16 he names 31 people who live in a city he has never visited.

Since Roman inns were considered little removed from houses of ill repute, Christians early on developed the habit of offering hospitality to traveling believers. As this habit of hospitality became widely known, con men began taking advantage of it, masquerading as believers.

John warns his lady friend to not let such people into her house, for theological reasons and for safety reasons.

Some would say this conflicts with John's earlier statement to practice love. On the contrary, this personal letter simply gives us a glimpse of the struggle the early church had as it grew in a hostile and dangerous world. We have the same struggle today. There is a delicate balance between Christian hospitality and wisdom. John's advice to this Christian woman of the first century is appropriate for today. We must always be careful.

White is a member of First Church, Clinton.



YOU CAN RESPOND RIGHT NOW!

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you.
(I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death.
(I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you.
(I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with him.
(I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name (John 1:12).

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

Bibliocipher

By Charles Marx
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ERXI, D ERXSRJN, XJU
OZSR RXI, D RXICE: KDI
CER GDIU EXCE NLDJR,
Z EXSR JDMIZNERU XJU
WIDMOEC ML VEZGUIR,
XJU CERH EXSR
IRWRGGRU XOZJNC QR.

ZNXXZE DJR: CAD

Clue: E = H

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Proverbs Eight: Eleven.

Mormon court fight shows secretive ways

SALT LAKE CITY (BP) — A copyrights infringement case being waged by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) against a Salt Lake City evangelical couple is sending shock waves through cyberspace, triggering debate over individuals' First Amendment rights to freedom of religion, and turning the spotlight on the secretive nature of the Mormon Church.

Jerald and Sandra Tanner printed excerpts of an unpublished Mormon book on their Lighthouse Ministry's Internet site, www.utlm.org, last July. The book, which the Tanners obtained from anonymous sources, explains how members can remove their names from LDS church rolls. The church, through its Intellectual Reserves, Inc., subsidiary that holds the rights to its intellectual property, sued in October alleging copyright infringement.

The church also convinced a U.S. district judge to issue a temporary restraining order, a ruling that required the Tanners to remove the pages from their website. However, the Tanners later posted an e-mail message from a reader containing Internet addresses where the entire book — "Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 1, Stake Presidencies and Bishops" that deals with church disciplinary procedures — could be read.

The LDS Church, in response, asked the judge to order the Tanners to remove the addresses on the theory they were encouraging others to view and make illegal copies of the handbook pages. The judge ordered the addresses removed, creating a firestorm on the Internet.

Just about everyone who is concerned about how existing copyright laws may be applied to cyberspace is watching the Utah case more closely. David Sorkin, a professor at The John Marshall Law School in Chicago, told The Salt Lake Tribune.

"The question becomes, 'Are you linking to the owner of the information or just a website where it is posted?'" he said.

However, Mormon Church attorney Berne Broadbent told The Tribune a distinction could be made between someone

merely providing a link to another website and providing an address to a site known to contain copyright violations, he noted.

The Tanners' Salt Lake City attorney, Brian Barnard, has appealed the judge's preliminary injunction banning his clients

links to the same information as my clients put up. The Salt Lake Tribune published the same URLs and neither The Tribune nor The New York Times is being sued. So it appears this litigation is based more on a theological dispute."

Sandra Tanner, who was featured in a video explaining Mormon beliefs issued prior to the 1998 Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) annual meeting in Salt Lake City by the SBC's North American Mission Board, said, "In other churches you would have been given a manual when you joined that would have laid out their church discipline policies, but in Mormonism, you are not given a church handbook that explains their discipline processes and, in fact, they are kept secret from you."

"In the Mormon Church they never drop you from the rolls no matter how inactive you have been. I have people writing us all the time, asking what they have to do to get these people [the LDS] off their backs."

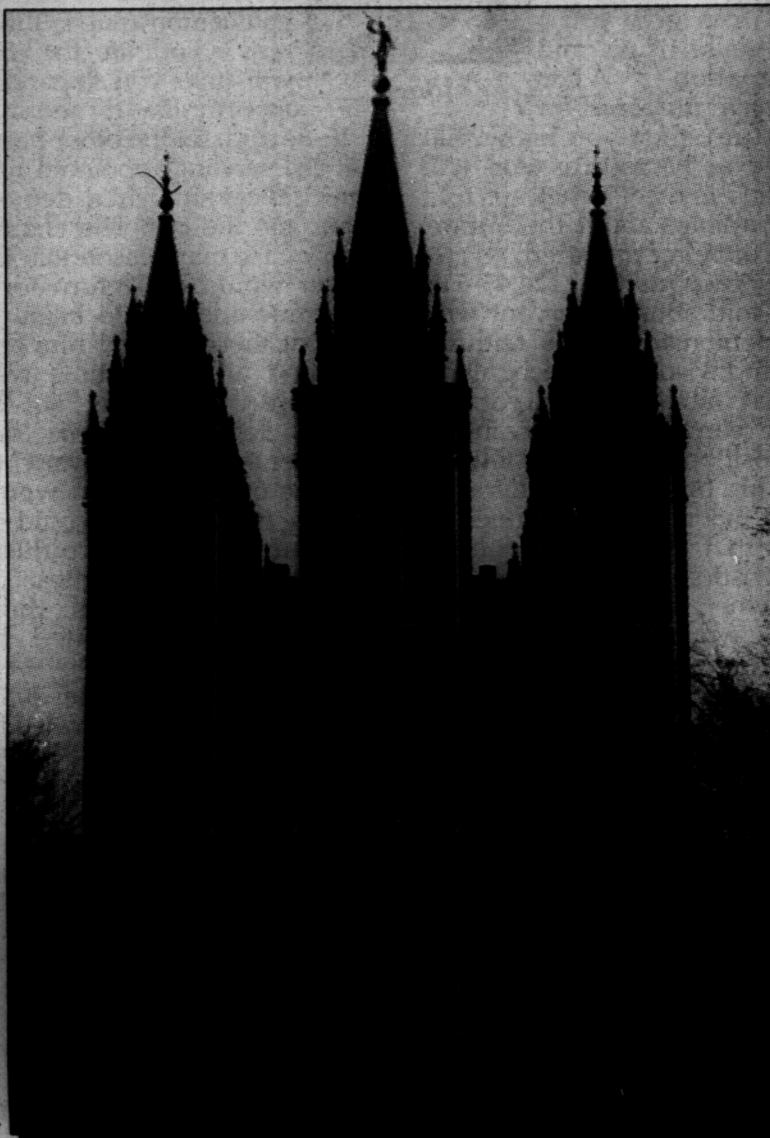
Phil Roberts, vice president for strategic city strategy for the SBC's North American Mission Board and author of "Mormonism Unmasked," called the LDS "America's largest secretive organization."

"They do not issue any financial reports or internal information," Roberts said. "Attendees cannot discuss the temple ceremony outside the temple. At various points, they are extremely clandestine. It would be an odd religion that said, 'You cannot leave.' The LDS is very concerned about statistics and to show positive growth."

Sandra Tanner said the LDS Church thought it was only getting involved in a simple copyright lawsuit case, but now finds itself between a rock and a hard place.

"The Mormon Church is so concerned about PR, that I can't imagine them wanting to be involved in a lawsuit that would get everyone on the Internet mad at them."

The lawsuit has prompted at least one unexpected result: "We've tripled the number of people coming to our website, and it's put us in contact with a lot of marginal Mormons who might not have contacted us otherwise," Tanner said.



Mormon Temple, Salt Lake City

from displaying the Internet addresses on their website to the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals in Denver.

"It is a theological dispute as much as it's a copyright dispute," Barnard told Baptist Press. "Because the Tanners have been critics of the LDS Church for some time, I think they are being singled out for this litigation. The New York Times put up Uniform Resource Locators (URLs) with

Taste of persecution awaits conference attendees

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP) — Christians living in the United States do not worship under persecution, but organizers of the Missions 2000 conference will try to recreate the experience for youth and young adults Feb. 18-20.

The conference is open to high school and college students, and will take place at Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

On the night of Feb. 19 students will hold a worship service in the basement of one of the seminary dorms — in essence going "underground" to worship as persecuted Christians must do in some countries.

Missy Woodward, one of the Missions 2000 coordinators, said attention is being paid to detail. There will even be storyline "guards" — supposedly looking for Christians — posted outside the dorm.

"Hopefully we can find some actors to be arrested on the way to the church, so the students can see that," she said.

The persecuted church experience is one of three areas of focus of the conference. On Friday night, Feb. 18, the conference will focus on Generation X. Randy Smith, the founder of Youth Ministry International, will speak.

The focus Saturday afternoon, Feb. 19, will be on the Latino community. The speaker then will be Juan Sanchez, coordinator of missions activities at Southern Seminary.

Jerome Byrd, a pastor from Ohio, will be in charge of the service during the "underground" church meeting.

"We wanted the students to get a feel for the nations, instead of always having things our way — the American way," Woodward said. "And we

wanted to include Generation X, because that's such a large group. We wanted this conference to be so impacting that it would change people's lives and open their eyes to the world."

The theme this year is "Jesus, The Way," which is taken from John 14:6, "I am the way and the truth and the life."

Sanchez believes that conferences such as Missions 2000 can have a great impact on students.

"There's a great missions movement among young people, so I think there's a great interest in what God is doing around the world," he said. "It's exciting for me to see the impact that a young single person can have. They have no strings attached. They have their life ahead of them and can just say, 'Whatever the Lord wants me to do, I will go.'"

On the first two nights students will break into small groups and create strategies to reach the world's unreached people groups with the Gospel.

Missionaries from the Southern Baptist Convention's International Mission Board and North American Mission Board will also be on campus for consultation with students.

"Of course, we do want people who do want to go into missions to come," Woodward said, "but we also want people who are just thinking about it and may one day go on a mission trip to come."

Sanchez said that John 14:6 is an appropriate verse for the conference.

For information on the conference, call 1-800-626-5525, ext. 4617, or visit the Internet site, <http://missions2000.sbts.edu>.